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TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN STATISTICS

Technical cooperation activities in statistics

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report has been prepared in response to the request by the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session (New York, 27 February-3 March 1995) that the United Nations Statistics Division submit a consolidated report on the state of technical cooperation in the field of statistics to the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination.

The information obtained from both donors and recipients has been aggregated and is provided in annex I and annex II respectively of this report.

At the request of the Working Group at its eighteenth session, held in New York, from 16 to 18 April 1996 (see document E/CN.3/1997/19, para. 36), two reports on crucial issues on technical cooperation were prepared, one by the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1997/18/Add.1) and one by Statistics Canada (E/CN.3/1997/18/Add.2).

* E/CN.3/1997/1.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Statistical Commission, at its twenty-eighth session (New York, 27 February-3 March 1995), requested the United Nations Statistics Division to submit an analytical written report to the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on the subject of technical cooperation in statistics.[1] The United Nations Statistics Division reported the problems encountered in the preparation of the report on technical cooperation funding to the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination at its eighteenth session (New York, 16-18 April 1996) as well as to the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittee on Statistical Activities at its thirtieth session (New York, 7-9 May 1996) (see documents E/CN.3/AC.1/1996/R.6 and E/CN.3/1997/21, para. 11, respectively). The Working Group took note of these problems and requested that a report be prepared for the Statistical Commission using the available information. The Working Group also requested that Statistics Canada, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) work with the United Nations Statistics Division to include in the report of the United Nations Statistics Division coverage of crucial issues related to technical cooperation (E/CN.3/1997/19, para. 36 (b)). The report on those crucial issues is provided to the Statistical Commission as documents E/CN.3/1997/18/Add.1 and E/CN.3/1997/18/Add.2.

I. ACTIONS TAKEN

2. Based on experience gained from previous questionnaires and a pilot study undertaken in August 1995, the United Nations Statistics Division believed that it was not feasible to classify technical cooperation funding information precisely in a uniform manner, given the varying methods and definitions adopted in the process of accounting for technical cooperation by different donors and recipients as well as the different accounting periods.

3. Accordingly, the United Nations Statistics Division decided not to provide a precise definition for the term "technical cooperation funding in statistics" or to disaggregate such a category. It recognized that each statistical office might interpret this category differently. However, the common culture of national statistics offices was such that the differences should be reasonably small and the aggregate information might still be useful.

4. The information sought for the report included direction or source of technical cooperation (depending on whether the country was a donor or recipient), the project title and a brief description, as well as the annual cost of the assistance involved.

5. The questionnaire requesting the information on technical cooperation was sent to 25 donor countries, 25 international donor organizations and 158 recipient countries as well as four countries that were grouped as both donors and recipients.

6. Thirty-three donor countries and organizations responded. In addition, 41 developing countries and countries with economies in transition also responded. However, only eight donor countries, four donor organizations and the European Communities, and 27 recipient countries were able to supply values of technical assistance provided and received. (Some donor countries and organizations provided substantial descriptive material of their technical assistance activities without value indicators.) Therefore, value figures of technical assistance provided are by no means to be considered complete and accurate.

7. That most recipient countries that responded provided only sporadic value figures for certain statistical projects for some years made it difficult to analyse the situation. An attempt was also made to aggregate value figures by country/organization in one common currency (in this case, United States dollars. The harmonization was made using mid-point exchange rates for respective years. Therefore, currency fluctuation might also affect the results of the aggregation. The quantitative responses to the questionnaire are shown in annex I to this report for donor countries/organizations and in annex II for recipient countries. Countries/organizations that provided value figures even for one year are included in the annexes. A full list of the countries/organizations that responded to the inquiry is provided in annex III.

8. For the donor countries listed in annex I, technical assistance provided increased from 11 million dollars to 15 million dollars over the period 1992-1994. However, there was a decrease to under 9 million dollars in 1995. It should be noted that many donor countries are not represented in annex I, and also that there is little correlation between the totals provided by donor countries and those provided by recipient countries, lending further doubt as to the utility of these data. With regard to the donor organizations that reported, amounts in 1992 and 1993 were stable; there was a 30 per cent decline in 1994 and a further 30 per cent decline between 1994 and 1995. The assistance provided by the European Union fluctuated considerably from year to year with a low of 7 million dollars in 1994 and a high of 34 million dollars in 1995.

II. POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

9. The Commission may wish to:

(a) Discuss what, if any, generalizable conclusion may be drawn from the data provided;

(b) Comment on points made in documents E/CN.3/1997/18/Add.1 and E/CN.3/1997/18/Add.2;

(c) Consider ways to obtain more complete and accurate information on funding for technical cooperation.

Notes

[1] See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 8 (E/1995/28), para. 87 (c).

Annex I

TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN STATISTICS
(DONOR INFORMATION)

Number	Country/organization	Amount (in US dollars)			
		1992	1993	1994	1995
1	Australia	129 614	130 535	199 300	93 890
2	Austria	Not available	2 635	5 129	2 440
3	Canada	558 247	453 240	845 316	621 633
4	Finland	3 813	9 509	12 650	72 264
5	Japan	4 375 866	4 606 169	5 308 564	71 476
6	Portugal	6 133	28 645	17 629	38 317
7	United Kingdom	445 168	2 406 819	3 052 097	2 531 788
8	United States	5 627 219	5 143 219	5 974 069	5 566 851
	Total (countries)	11 146 060	12 780 771	15 414 754	8 998 659
9	FAO[a]	11 906 439	12 585 141	8 092 356	5 747 768
10	ISI[b]	30 000	12 000	36 000	30 000
11	UNESCO[c]	1 112 500	713 300	896 700	583 166
12	UNIDO[d]	595 400	174 500	671 965	232 000
	Total (organizations)	13 644 339	13 484 941	9 697 021	6 592 934
13	European Communities	17 471 080	21 305 174	6 614 020	33 537 120

[a] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

[b] International Statistical Institute.

[c] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

[d] United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

Annex II

TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN STATISTICS
(RECIPIENT INFORMATION)

Number	Country	Amount (in US dollars)			
		1992	1993	1994	1995
1	Barbados	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	75 000
2	Belarus	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	306 000
3	Belize	21 579	110 197	103 892	n.a.
4	Bolivia	1 084 893	764 111	314 784	521 862
5	Cyprus	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	143 900
6	Czech Republic	52 747	65 183	27 260	42 589
7	Ecuador	n.a.	23 614	n.a.	15 000
8	Indonesia	40 000	n.a.	1 027 144	443 260
9	Jordan	n.a.	n.a.	104 368	175 451
10	Kyrgyzstan	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2 806 636
11	Latvia	n.a.	n.a.	866 000	738 433
12	Malaysia	n.a.	341 091	94 025	n.a.
13	Marshall Islands	n.a.	65 000	10 000	20 000
14	Morocco	n.a.	113 540	136 780	188 278
15	Panama	n.a.	594 000	n.a.	195 500
16	Peru	479 964	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
17	Philippines	1 394 832	474 737	205 377	338 005
18	Romania	4 542 000	10 602	5 483 540	331 960
19	Slovakia	1 298 000	n.a.	374 850	2 092 800
20	Slovenia	12 392	11 655	96 837	55 827
21	Sri Lanka	300 000	n.a.	n.a.	35 000
22	Swaziland	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	385 619

Number	Country	Amount (in US dollars)			
		1992	1993	1994	1995
23	Syrian Arab Republic	n.a.	256 191	196 425	510 871
24	Thailand	425 925	n.a.	n.a.	45 000
25	Uganda	1 072 479	2 301 865	1 631 966	3 703 413
26	Ukraine	220 551	429 080	364 130	89 430
27	Venezuela	n.a.	n.a..	194 750	n.a.
	Total	10 945 362	5 560 866	11 232 158	13 259 834

Note: "n.a." means data unavailable.

Annex III

LIST OF REPLIES RECEIVED FROM COUNTRIES/ORGANIZATIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION

Donor countries

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics
2. Federal Statistical Office, Germany
3. Statistics Bureau, Japan
4. Statistics Canada
5. Austrian Central Statistical Office
6. Statistics Denmark
7. Statistics Finland
8. National Statistical Service of Greece
9. Statistics Iceland
10. National Statistical Office, Republic of Korea
11. Statistics Netherlands
12. Statistics New Zealand
13. National Statistical Institute, Portugal
14. Office of Management and Budget, United States of America

Donor organizations

1. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
2. International Labour Organization (ILO)
3. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
4. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
5. International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
6. International Monetary Fund (IMF)

7. Universal Postal Union (UPU)

8. International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

9. World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

10. World Trade Organization

11. Information Systems Coordination Committee (ISCC)

12. World Customs Organization (WCO)

13. Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat)

14. Inter-American Statistical Institute (IASI)

15. International Statistical Institute (ISI)

16. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)

17. Overseas Development Administration (ODA)

18. United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

19. World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD))

Recipient countries

1. Armenia
2. Barbados
3. Belarus
4. Belize
5. Bermuda
6. Bolivia
7. Bulgaria
8. Cyprus
9. Czech Republic
10. Ecuador
11. Egypt
12. Estonia
13. Haiti
14. Hungary
15. Indonesia
16. Jamaica
17. Jordan
18. Kazakstan
19. Kyrgyzstan
20. Latvia
21. Malawi
22. Malaysia
23. Maldives
24. Marshall Islands
25. Mexico
26. Morocco
27. Panama
28. Peru
29. Philippines
30. Romania
31. Slovakia
32. Swaziland
33. Thailand
34. Turkey
35. Uganda
36. Venezuela
37. Yugoslavia
38. Nicaragua
39. Sri Lanka
40. Syrian Arab Republic
41. Ukraine